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CPYRGHT

STRANGER THAN SPY FICTION: THE STORY OF DOUBLE AGENT PHILBY

The British Secret Service got one more rude jolt in early October when the full story of double agent Harold Philby broke into print.

Details of Philby's 30-year devotion to the Russian cause while he held top positions in British Intelligence turn many spy thrillers pale by comparison.

From the early '30s, Philby was in the Soviet camp, heart and soul, it has now been revealed. He was recruited by the Communists about 1935, covered the war in Spain for "The London Times" and was employed by British Intelligence after the outbreak of World War II.

Thereafter, he rose steadily in the esteem of his employers and by 1944 was head of Britain's counterespionage. The mission of the Philby unit, ostensibly, was to find out what the enemy knew and then to neutralize that knowledge. To do this successfully, the unit had complete access to everything known to British Intelligence. In short, it was the perfect niche for a Soviet double agent.

In the last year of the war, Philby fed the Russians Allied secrets, while pretending to exploit leaks in the enemy's Intelligence. He gave the impression that he was performing with distinction, was

widely regarded as a potential chief of the entire service.

In 1947, as head of British Intelligence in Turkey, Philby roamed at will over Anatolia in a jeep, kept the Russians posted on airfields, supply depots and communications being set up there under the Truman Doctrine.

In 1949, Philby came to Washington to head British Intelligence and worked

closely with the Central Intelligence Agency.

It was Philby who played "the third man" role—tipping off two British diplomat-accomplices, Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, that the net was about to close on them. Both had been in sensitive positions with the British in Washington before they disappeared in 1951 and later turned up in the Soviet Union as defectors. In retrospect, it now seems clear that Philby did this to protect himself—and his more significant role as Russia's No. 1 stool pigeon.

But it didn't entirely work. Philby was under a cloud. The CIA refused to talk to him. And he was forced to leave the British service in 1951.

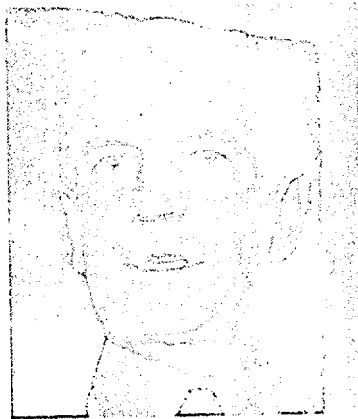
Philby at once set about to refurbish his image by playing on the anti-Americanism in the British Establishment. Word got around that Philby was the victim of a witch hunt, a kind of corollary casualty of the era in which Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (Rep.), of Wisconsin, was hunting for Communists in the U. S. Government.

In 1955, he was employed by "The London Observer" as a Middle East correspondent—after categorical assurances were given that he no longer worked for Intelligence—and never again would.

Inexplicably, Philby once more got a foot in the door with British Intelligence. And he stayed in business, feeding secrets to the Russians until a Soviet defector put the finger on him in December of 1962. Confronted with the facts, Philby fled in January of 1963. Said "The London Observer": "British authorities either would not or could not stop him."

On October 3, it was reported that double agent Harold Philby, now 55 years old and comfortably ensconced in a luxury apartment on the outskirts of Moscow, had been married for the fourth time.

His bride: the divorced wife of his fellow defector, Donald Maclean.



—Wide World Photo

Master spy Philby fed Allied secrets to Russians for 30 years.